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At last the dam is broken and American visitors are beginning to arrive once more. The first of last week we heard the good news that the State Department had lifted its restrictions on travel in this part of the Middle East. One can hardly imagine how good this news is if he has not lived through the past five months in Jerusalem, a city which depends largely upon the tourist trade for its very existence. Day after day the shops have been empty of customers, the hotels empty of guests and the economic life of the city has declined to lower and lower levels. But now everything is changed and the veil of depression has begun to lift. It is particularly fortunate that the decision has come just at this time when the most important season of the year is less than two weeks away. We now have good reason to hope that there will be a fairly normal Easter---for the city, if not for the American School. Our first casual visitor from America arrived just yesterday. He and his wife had been staying in Athens, Istanbul and Beirut for the past three weeks, waiting patiently for an opportunity to visit the Holy Land. Suddenly, as they were standing in line to board a plane for Baghdad, word came from the consulate that the ban had been lifted; so they immediately cancelled their plans and came to Jerusalem instead. There is good reason to think there will be many others like them.

We at the School did not have to wait quite so long for our first American guests, since Prof. and Mrs. Carl Kraeling had legitimate business reasons for coming this way and were able to get the State Department's permission to do so long before the general prohibition was removed. Unfortunately they came at about the worst possible time for the transaction of important business with government officials, for it was a week in which there were four official holidays--which must be about a record for any part of the world. Monday was Arab Independence Day, celebrating the end of Turkish rule, while Friday to Sunday was a special holiday period set aside to celebrate the end of the Jordan-British Treaty of alliance and the promised withdrawal of British troops. The holidays passed without any unpleasant incidents in Jerusalem, but of course all government offices were closed throughout the country. Prof. Kraeling's loss was our gain and we were delighted to have his company, as well as that of his wife, for six full days. A pleasant vignette of life in the American School this year would be a picture of us all sitting on the floor of the living room in the Director's House listening to an informal lecture, illustrated by Mrs. Kraeling's excellent photographs, on the progress of the Oriental Institute excavation at Tell el-Fara (ancient Ptolemais) in Libya, which was the ultimate goal of the Kraeling's visit to the Near East.

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If the political situation did not favor the Kraelings' visit, neither did the weather. It rained constantly during the time they were here, as it has for a large part of the spring. The spring flowers have come, and so have many other signs of a change in the seasons, but the weather remains damp and chilly. We are told that there has rarely been a year in which the rains have lasted longer or the cold weather persisted as late.

After a month's successful digging at Jericho, Miss Kenyon's spring season has ended. It required a great deal of courage on her part to come to the country when political feeling was still running high on account of the recent unhappy events at Suez, but the venture was amply justified since there were no difficulties of any kind and the expedition received the full support of the Department of Antiquities and the local population. She came with the intention of running only a very small affair with not more than fifteen workmen, but things went so well and so many people wanted work that it became a full-scale operation with four supervisors and four gangs of workmen. Actually, the principal objective of the month's work--the clearing of the east side of the neolithic tower--was not attained since it lies too deep beneath the surface of the tell and, worse yet, directly beneath one of the old dumps. Many meters of earth had to be cleared away and it proved simply impossible to do it in a period of four weeks, one of which was largely occupied by the four holidays previously mentioned. However, a good start was made and when the dig resumes next October it should be possible to complete the task in a comparatively short time. All who have seen this fantastic monument of primitive man--or even seen pictures of it--will be eagerly waiting for the results. Those of us who are here this year and have watched the progress of the work can only regret that we shall not be around in the fall to see them.

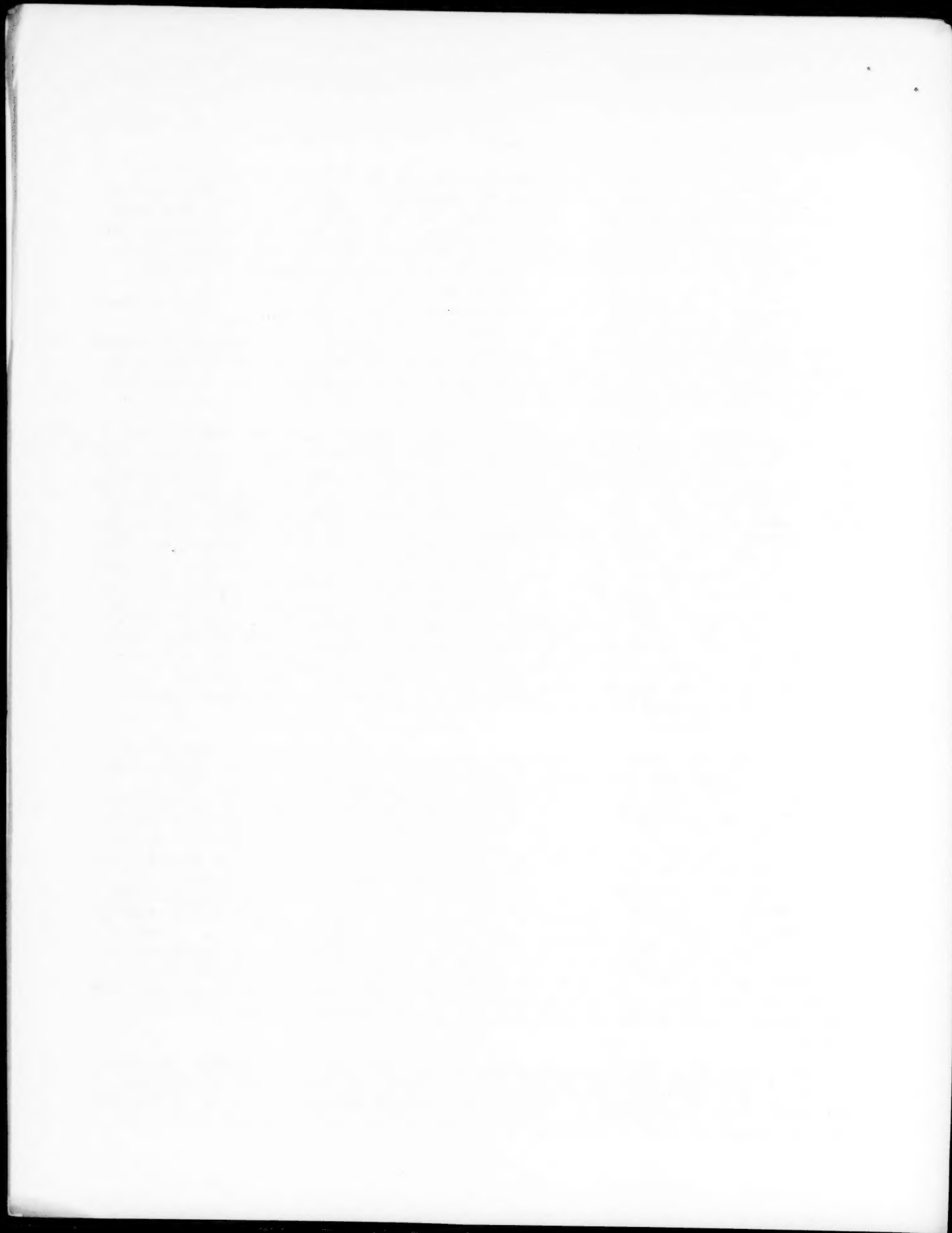
Since this season's work was intended to be only preliminary to the work in the fall, no startling discoveries could be expected and indeed none were made. The areas immediately adjacent to the tower on the north and south were excavated to a considerably greater depth, but the most fruitful work was done in the area at the northeastern side of the tell where a fine example of a pre-pottery neolithic round house was discovered with its walls preserved to a remarkable height. Dr. Toombs had the good fortune to be supervisor in this area. We have had a good deal of fun with him over the fact that, having spent a large part of the winter studying pottery, he had his first practical assignment in a pre-pottery neolithic dig. It should perhaps be added that the whole of this season's work, with the exception of the surface area east of the tower, was concerned with the earlier, or "hog-back-brick" phase of p.-p. neolithic (as opposed to the later, or "plastered-floor" period). The most remarkable thing about the tell at Jericho at the present stage of investigation is the evidence it gives of the unbelievable length of duration of the neolithic period even in its earliest phases, and the surprising height of the material accomplishments of neolithic man.

In the field of the Dead Sea Scrolls there is little to report except that work on them continues to progress. Because of the damage inflicted on them by long confinement in the damp vaults of the bank in Amman it has been necessary for Father Milik and Dr. Hunzinger to expend most of their energies on the time-consuming and nerve-wracking job of carefully removing each of the tiny fragments from the glass plates between which they are kept so as to clean them from moisture and occasional traces of mold. This pedestrian, though necessary, work should soon be finished and the work can then be resumed on a more constructive level. It is hoped also that some other members of the international team of scholars will be returning soon so that more rapid progress can be made in the study, and consequently toward the publication, of this important material.

In the meantime life within the American School goes smoothly forward. We shall soon be ending our formal academic work, and the members of our small community are already making plans for their homeward journeys. Dr. Pellett's family is going to join him here in the early part of May. They expect to spend some time in Egypt and will then return for a brief sight-seeing tour before they leave for good. At about the same time Dr. Erdelyan plans to return to Belgrade. Dr. Toombs is going to be here this summer for the dig at Balata, but may possibly return to the States for a few weeks' visit with his family before the season there actually begins. Next week is Holy Week and much of our time will inevitably be spent in observing, and participating in, the innumerable ecclesiastical ceremonies which mark this colorful and interesting time. After Easter we hope to set off immediately for the annual long trip to Petra, which was planned for last fall but summarily postponed by our precipitate evacuation at the end of October.

We have made two very interesting trips in recent weeks. The first was to Herodium and Mar Saba, both located in or near the Wilderness of Judea. Herodium is the strange, flat-topped hill which is the most striking landmark of the whole area to the southeast of Jerusalem and the site of one of the famous palaces or fortresses of Herod the Great, the one in which he was finally buried. An hour's drive beyond Herodium is the great monastery founded by St. Saba toward the end of the 5th century, in what were then the remote fastnesses of the desert. Although the buildings of the great fortress-monastery are kept in excellent condition, only about twenty monks still remain to represent the vast numbers who once inhabited this area. Nevertheless it is not difficult even now to picture in one's imagination the life of the hermits and coenobites of the earlier Christian centuries who came to this inhospitable region in order to escape the glittering corruption of life in the great cities of the civilized world.

Another, and much more adventurous trip, was the one we made to Araq el-Emir, the hideaway of a certain Hyrcanus of the house of Tobias who fled from Jerusalem in the early second century B.C. to avoid the jealous anger of his brothers. Whether or not he actually built the



structures now to be seen there is still debated, and it seems probable that at least part of the work is to be dated a century earlier. But, whoever built it, it is certainly one of the most fascinating as well as most beautiful places in the whole Palestinian area. Also, unfortunately, it is one of the least accessible. It required an automobile drive of three hours, the last part over an almost impassable road, and then a hike of an hour and a half over rugged terrain, climaxed by wading through the rushing waters of the Wadi es Sir, to reach the remote mountain valley in which Araq el-Emir is located. We had as our guests Mr. Yusuf Sa'ad of the Museum and Mr. Sami Muddah of the Department of Antiquities. Neither of them had ever reached the place before and were glad to have the opportunity to do so, even though the length of the journey there and back left us entirely too little time to explore it as we should have liked.

Recent Sunday evening visitors have been Mr. Robert Kilgore and Mr. Robert Park, the one a new vice-consul and the other an administrative officer at the American Consulate, Prof. and Mrs. Herzberg from Kiel (who are Dr. Hunzinger's prospective parents-in-law and were leading a party of German pilgrims through the Holy Land) and Father Milik of the international team working on the Scrolls.

Omar's friends, who are many, will be glad to learn that he is the father of a new son.

Robert C. Dentan, Director

Jerusalem School